

## Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 NSC-05 /053 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/PAF:WSDIEDRICH:JZ

APPROVED BY ARA/PAF:BBELL

ARA/CCA:MR.GLEYSTEN (INFO)

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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UNCLAS STATE 142218

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CU

SUBJECT: EXCERPTS ON CUBA FROM NOON BRIEFING

STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN ROBERT ANDERSON HAD THE FOLLOW-  
ING TO SAY CONCERNING CUBA AT THE NOON BRIEFING TODAY  
(TUESDAY):

Q: DO WE ATTACH ANY SIGNIFICANCE TO THE DECISION OF CUBA  
TO RETURN THE RANSOM MONEY TO SOUTHERN AIRWAYS?

A: I ASSUME YOU SAW WHAT THE SECRETARY HAD TO SAY ON THE  
SUBJECT OF CUBA YESTERDAY. AS I SAY, THE TEXT OF WHAT HE  
HAD TO SAY IS AVAILABLE FOR YOU IF YOU HAVE NOT. BUT ON  
THE RETURN OF THE RANSOM MONEY, OBVIOUSLY WE WELCOME  
THE MOVE BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO GET THIS RANSOM  
MONEY BACK FOR SOUTHERN AIRWAYS FOR QUITE SOME TIME THROUGH  
THE SWISS EMBASSY IN HAVANA.

Q: IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE CUBANS ONCE RETURNED  
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THE RANSOM IN A CHECK THAT THEY COULD NOT CASH, IS THAT  
CORRECT?

A: I BELIEVE YOU ARE CORRECT -- AND IT WAS A CHECK THAT

WAS, IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, MADE OUT TO SOUTHERN AIRWAYS  
BUT IT WAS DRAWN ON THE BLOCKED CUBAN ACCOUNT IN AMERICA.

Q: THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY THAT HE WOULD BE PREPARED  
TO RECIPROCATE GESTURES BY THE CASTRO GOVERNMENT. ARE WE  
NOW CONSIDERING APPROPRIATE RECIPROCAL GESTURES IN  
RESPONSE TO THIS?

A: I THINK THE NEXT STEP, WITH REGARD TO CUBA, IS THE  
JULY 16, I BELIEVE IT IS, MEETING IN COSTA RICA, IN  
SAN JOSE, WHERE THE QUESTION OF THE OAS SANCTIONS WILL BE  
RAISED. I DO NOT ENVISAGE ANY PARTICULAR STEPS OR MOVE-  
MENT PRIOR TO THE CONSIDERATION THAT WILL BE UNDERTAKEN  
IN SAN JOSE BEGINNING JULY 16. THERE IS A MULTILATERAL  
ASPECT THAT HAS TO BE DEALT WITH AND SHOULD BE DEALT WITH  
FIRST, AS I BELIEVE HAS BEEN MADE CLEAR BY ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY ROGERS IN TESTIMONY ON THE HILL.

Q: I THINK WE ARE TALKING ABOUT TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.  
THE SECRETARY SAID HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO RECIPROCATE  
GESTURES BY THE CASTRO GOVERNMENT, NOT ON A MULTILATERAL  
BASIS.

A: I REALIZE THAT. I AM JUST SAYING TO YOU WITH  
REGARD TO ANY RECIPROCATION -- I REALIZE WHAT HE SAID  
YESTERDAY. I DO NOT EXPECT ANY RECIPROCATION SUCH AS YOU  
SUGGEST TO OCCUR BEFORE THE MEETING THAT WILL BE TAKING  
PLACE IN SAN JOSE. THIS IS THE NEXT ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Q: IS THE SECRETARY GOING TO THAT MEETING, DO YOU KNOW?

A: AS FAR AS I KNOW, HE IS NOT GOING TO THAT MEETING.

Q: WAS THE RETURN OF THE MONEY ONE OF THE LIMITED STEPS  
HE WAS TALKING ABOUT YESTERDAY, TAKEN BY CASTRO?

A: I DID NOT ASK THE SECRETARY AFTERWARDS WHAT HIS  
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DEFINITION OF LIMITED STEPS WAS. BUT I WOULD RECALL FOR  
YOU, LAST WEEK ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS, IN HIS TESTI-  
MONY ON THE HILL, DID MENTION SEPCIFICALLY THIS QUESTION.  
HE MENTIONED A NUMBER OF ISSUES ON BOTH SIDES, OUTSTANDING  
ISSUES. HE MENTIONED TRADE AS ONE, AND HE MENTIONED  
FAMILY VISITS, ETC., THEN HE ALSO SAID THAT "WE ARE CON-  
CERNED WITH THE RETURN OF AIRCRAFT HIJACK RANSOM MONEY  
WHICH FOUND ITS WAY TO CUBA AND WHICH CUBA HAS RETAINED."  
SO THAT, FRANKLY, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED MORE THAN A  
LIMITED STEP.

Q: I WASN'T MEASURING IT --

A: --- AS I READ WHAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS SAID.

Q: ALL I MEANT IS THE SECRETARY YESTERDAY CREDITED CUBA  
WITH TAKING CERTAIN STEPS, AND HE DIDN'T GIVE ANY  
SPECIFICS.

A: RIGHT.

Q: I WONDERED IF THIS WAS ONE, AND IF HE HAD ANY OTHER  
STEPS THEY HAVE TAKEN IN MIND, AS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED.

A: I DO NOT KNOW WHICH SPECIFIC STEPS HE HAD IN MIND.

Q: HAVE WE TAKEN ANY STEPS IN THE PAST? IN CASTING MY  
MIND BACK OVER THIS, IT SEEMS THAT CASTRO HAS MADE MORE  
GESTURES THAN WE HAVE -- THAN THE UNITED STATES HAD. CAN  
YOU TELL ME WHAT THE UNITED STATES HAS DONE?

A: THERE ARE TWO ITEMS THAT COME TO MIND. THERE WAS A  
LIFTING ON THE RESTRICTION OF CUBAN DIPLOMATS UP IN NEW  
YORK. THERE HAS BEEN AN EASING ON TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS  
TO CUBA. THESE ARE THE ONLY TWO THAT COME TO MIND HERE  
AT THE MOMENT.

Q: BOB, IN THE ROGERS TESTIMONY TO WHICH YOU REFERRED,  
ROGERS INDICATED THAT IT WOULD BE QUITE A SLOW LABORIOUS  
PROCESS OF COMPLETING ALL THE REQUIREMENTS FOR LIFTING  
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THE EMBARGO AND URGED CONGRESS TO KEEP ITS HANDS OFF THE  
PROCESS. DOES IT STILL LOOK LIKE A VERY LONG, LABORIOUS  
PROCESS?

A: I KNOW OF NOTHING THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE SINCE  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS SPOKE THAT WOULD HAVE  
CHANGED HIS ESTIMATE.

Q: WELL, WAS HIS STATEMENT SUPPOSED TO EMPHASIZE THE  
LABORIOUS NATURE OF THIS PROCESS?

A: I DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE INTENDED TO EMPHASIZE IN THAT  
STATEMENT.

Q: DID THE SECRETARY KNOW YESTERDAY BEFORE HE SPOKE  
THAT CUBA HAD MADE THIS DECISION TO RETURN THE RANSOM?

A: TO MY KNOWLEDGE, NO, HE DID NOT.

Q: HOW DOES THE DEPARTMENT FEEL ABOUT GESTURES LIKE THIS  
BEING MADE KNOWN THROUGH CONGRESSMEN RATHER THAN DIRECTLY  
THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OR THROUGH THE SWISS EMBASSY?

A: WELL, I THINK, THAT IN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE  
MOTIVES THAT CUBA MAY HAVE IN MIND IN MAKING THESE

GESTURES, IT OBVIOUSLY WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO DISCUSS  
THESE IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS RATHER THAN  
DEALING OR COMMUNICATING WITH INDIVIDUAL SENATORS OR  
MAKING PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS, BECAUSE THERE IS NO NEGOTIAT-  
ING PROCESS THAT ONE HAS, IN ORDER TO TRY AND EVALUATE  
JUST WHAT THE OTHER SIDE MAY HAVE IN MIND. AND IN THAT  
CONNECTION, MR. ROGERS IN THIS SAME TESTIMONY HAD ONE  
INTERESTING PART, IT SEEMED TO ME, WHEN HE SAID: "THE  
PROCESS OF IMPROVING AND NORMALIZING RELATIONS IN THE CASE  
OF CUBA, AS IN OTHER INSTANCES, IS FIRST AND FOREMOST  
A PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION, AND THAT NEGOTIATION CAN ONLY  
BE CONDUCTED BY DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED."

SO THAT IS THE ONLY COMMENT I CAN GIVE YOU.  
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Q: HAVE WE PROPOSED THIS TO THE CUBANS -- DIRECT CON-  
TACTS?

A: NO, WE HAVE NOT PROPOSED DIRECT CONTACTS WITH THE  
CUBANS AS OF THIS TIME.

Q: WHAT IS THE MEANING, THEN, OF THAT SENTENCE? IF THAT  
IS A SPECIAL POINT THAT MR. ROGERS WAS MAKING, ISN'T  
THE LOGIC THAT YOU WOULD FOLLOW IT UP AND SAY "LET'S  
TALK"?

A: AND THEN YOU CAN TAKE IT ONE STEP FURTHER, TO WHAT  
THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY, THE QUESTION THAT HE DIDN'T  
WISH TO GIVE ANY PRECISE LIST OF OUR REQUIREMENTS  
BECAUSE "I THINK WE SHOULD DISCUSS THOSE FIRST THROUGH  
PRIVATE CHANNELS." NOW, THE QUESTION OF WHEN, UNDER  
WHAT CONDITIONS -- THE DAY IS GOING TO COME WHEN WE WILL  
HAVE DISCUSSIONS. BUT I DON'T INTEND TO SPECULATE WHEN  
OR UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES.

Q: IT MAY BE THAT THE CUBANS DO MAKE CONTACT WITH  
SENATORS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS BECAUSE THERE ARE  
NO DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS GOING ON. AND IT SEEMS TO ME  
THAT THE U.S. POSITION HERE BLOCKS OFF CONGRESS AND  
BLOCKS OFF DIRECT DISCUSSIONS, BOTH.

A: WE ARE NOT BLOCKING OFF CONGRESS AT ALL HERE. I WAS  
ASKED A QUESTION AND I TRIED TO RESPOND TO HIS SPECIFIC  
QUESTION.

Q: I AM TRYING TO DETERMINE WHAT CHANNEL CUBA HAS APART

FROM VISITING CONGRESSMEN OR SENATORS TO MAKE ITS VIEWS  
DIRECTLY KNOWN TO THIS COUNTRY.

A: I BELIEVE THAT THE PUBLIC ROSTRUM IS OCCASIONALLY  
USED DOWN IN HAVANA.

Q: BOB, SHOULD WE TAKE A PUBLIC ROSTRUM STATEMENT TODAY  
AND ROGRES' LAST WEEK AS A PROPOSAL? IN THE OLD DAYS THAT  
IS WHAT WE WOULD HAVE DONE. THIS SOUNDS LIKE A PROPOSAL  
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TO HAVE DIRECT CONTACTS WITH CUBA.

A: I AM NOT MAKING ANY PROPOSAL FROM THIS PODIUM TO  
HAVE DIRECT CONTACTS WITH CUBA.

Q: WELL, WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP? ARE YOU EXPECTING CUBA  
TO SAY "OKAY, LET'S TALK," OR ARE YOU GOING TO HAVE A  
FORMAL PROPOSAL? ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT AT THE UN?

A: I DON'T WANT TO SPECULATE ON WHEN OR UNDER WHAT  
CONDITIONS THERE MAY BE EVENTUAL TALKS WITH THE CUBAN  
GOVERNMENT.

Q: HOW ABOUT JULY 16?

A: I DO NOT KNOW IF THERE WILL BE TALKS ON JULY 16. I  
WOULD DOUBT IT. THAT ISN'T THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 26 AUG 1999  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS, AIRCRAFT HIJACKING, PRESS CONFERENCES, NEGOTIATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 17 JUN 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975STATE142218  
**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** ARA/PAF:WSDIEDRICH:JZ  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** D750211-0588  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t197506101/baaaamxl.tel  
**Line Count:** 249  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN ARA  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ShawDG  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 13 MAR 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <13 MAR 2003 by PhilliR0>; APPROVED <09 MAR 2004 by ShawDG>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** n/a  
**TAGS:** PFOR, CU, US, XX, (ANDERSON, ROBERT)  
**To:** ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS  
USUN N Y  
USCINCSO  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006